(c) and (d) Presently, there is no registered demand for telephones in these villages. A telephone exchange at a suitable location may be considered when sufficient demand for telephones is registered.

New Postal Policy

2196. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is formulating a new postal policy as announced in 1992;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time-frame by which the policy would be announced and implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) During 1992 and 1997 action was initiated to draft a National Postal Policy but the matter did not progress thereafter. Recently, a draft National Postal Policy with specific focus on upgradation and modernisation of postal services with enhanced application of modern technology, expansion postal network through traditional methods of opening post offices as well as through innovative methods like franchising at minimum cost, involvement of private/initiative in the areas of value added services, generation of additional resources, steadfast-compliance of the principle of universal service obligation, strengthening international cooperation in the field of postal services on bilateral basis and through the aegis of the Universal Postal Union and other regional postal bodies engaged in the task of postal developmental was prepared. This policy paper was discussed in a meeting of the Consultative Committee of Parliament for the Ministry of Communications held on 5.2.99 in which certain suggestions were made. In the light of the suggestions, the draft policy paper is being modified and will again be placed before the Consultative Committee.

Revision of Phone Tariff Structure

2197. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to revise the Phone Tariff Structure;

(b) if so, whether the views of Parliamentary Standing Committee are being kept in mind by the Telephone Regulatory Authority of India; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The TRAI which has been mandated with fixation of telecom tariff has released telecom tariff order 1999 on 9.3.99. The said order has been held in abeyance till the entire issue is considered by Government.

(b) and (c) TRAI had occassion to discuss tariff proposals with the Standing Committee. The views of Standing Committee on Communications on telecom tariffs were also conveyed to TRAI.

Waiting list of Telephone Connections

2198. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons who are in the waiting list for telephones in Metropolitan cities as on 31st December, 1998; and

(b) what measures are proposed to be taken by Government to clear the waiting list?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA: (a) The details of persons on waiting list,

in Metropolitan cities, as on 31.12.1998 are as follows:-

Sl. No.	Metro City	Waiting List
1.	Mumbai	0
2.	Delhi	862
3.	Calcutta	13401
4.	Chennai	70277

(b) During the current funancial year up to 31.12.98, the number of new telephone connections provided is as follows:

Sl. No.	Metro City	Connections Provided
1.	Mumbai	102792
2.	Delhi	21242
3.	Calcutta	140847
4.	Chennai	48627

The waiting list as on 31.12.98 is likely to be cleared in Delhi and Calcutta by March 1999 and that of Chennai will be cleared partly during this year and the remaining progressively during 1999.

Satellite Telephones in Far-Flung Areas of Assam

2199. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government propose to instal thousands of Satellite Telephones in the far-flung areas of the country by Inmarsent, which is a cooperative body consisting of 79 countries;

(b) the deatails of the agreement entered into with Inmarset; and

(c) the number of telephones that will be installed in far-flung areas of Assam under this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) 500 satellite based village public tele phone (VPT)s are proposed to be instal led by the Department of Telecom throughout the country during 1999-2000. These VPTs will be provided in remote and inaccessible areas where other technologies are not economically feasible.

(b) INMARSAT, a consortium of several Government will provide the satellite link only at a fixed rate of usage.

(c) Locations for satellite based VPTs in Assam have not yet been identified. The number of such VPTs will be decided on completion of survey.

विदेश संचार निगम लिमिटेड में विनिवेश

2200. **श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र:** क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सरकार ने विदेश संचार निगम लिमिटेड के विनिवेश का निर्णय ले लिया है;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि वह निर्णय गलत समय पर लिया गया है क्योंकि अब लंबी दूरी की कॉलों की दरें कम करना आवश्यक हो गया है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो सरकार लंबी दूरी की कॉलों की दरों को कब तक कम करेगी?

संचार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कबीन्द्र पुरकायस्थ): (क) विदेश संचार निगम लि॰ में पहले ही विनिवेश किया जा चुका है।

(ख) जी नहीं। विनिवेश के कारण अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कॉलों की दरों में कमी करना अनिवार्य नहीं है।

(ग) अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय कॉलों की दरों का निर्धारण भारतीय दूरसंचार विनियामक प्राधिकरण कार्य क्षेत्र में आता है।

ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में सार्वजनिक टेलीफोनों के लिए निर्धारित लक्ष्य

2201. **श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह:**
श्री बलवन्त सिंह रामूवालिया:

क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि दूरसंचार विभाग ने चालू वित्तीय वर्ष के लिए ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में 87,000 सार्वजनिक टेलीफोनों का लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया था;